



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## REVIEWS.

---

*The Problem of Conduct.* By A. E. TAYLOR, Assistant Lecturer in Greek and Philosophy at the Owens College, Manchester. London: Macmillan & Co., 1901. Pp. 501.

THIS is the sort of book that the reader leaves with a sense of having been breathing deeper than usual. It evidently did not grow in a stifled atmosphere, and it leads out into a large place. The fundamental argument is an affair of the metaphysicians and the psychologists. A layman must protest his limitations if he ventures even an amateur's opinion upon this substratum of the reasoning. The main thesis is, however, a formula which many of the sociologists have long since derived from their different angle of approach. While I am unable to admit the validity of the logic by which the author arrives at his result, the conclusion itself is one for which the sociologists are prepared to expect psychological confirmation. As distinguished from his attempted demonstration of his theorem, the author's exposition of the view itself is luminous and strong. He is so sure of himself that he at times indulges the play of racy humor, and thereby enters an effective motion for a rehearing, in case the present contention is not sustained.

The purpose of the essay is perhaps most clearly indicated in the summary of the fourth chapter, as follows :

We claim, therefore, that a serious examination of the various types of virtue actually recognized among men is bound to show that there is no one common ultimate hypothesis which adequately describes them all, and that ethics must, therefore, like physics, be regarded as a merely empirical and provisional science, not based upon any metaphysical insight into ultimate truth. At the same time our discussion of the characteristic differences between human and extra-human evolution has helped to make it clear that ethics is not, what some thinkers have attempted to make it, a branch of applied biology, but an independent science founded directly upon psychology, and most closely allied to the other psychological sciences, sociology, economics, and — on its psychological side — anthropology.

The principal ground upon which the author bases his case is that virtue, as we know it, is of two types, the egoistic and the altruistic ;

and that the ultimate synthesis of self-realization with self-sacrifice is altogether impossible (p. 233). If the meaning is that, taking actual individuals as the test, everyone either fails to achieve in his own life what seems to himself a perfect synthesis, or, if he persuades himself to the contrary, his achievement would not be accepted by others as a success, there is little room for debate. If the contrary were true, it would mean that the world must be nearly ripe for winding up its affairs. Such a degree of human adaptation would have become feasible that the end of possible evolution would seem to be relatively near. The essay shows beyond dispute that men never do and probably never can accomplish a practical synthesis of "egoistic" and "altruistic" duties and virtues which will satisfy at the same time the actor and the critic. If the contention merely amounts to this, when the author declares (p. 201), "No theory can satisfactorily adjust the claims of the two," *i. e.*, if he means that no theory can furnish a rule which will supply the individual with an infallible prescription for achieving absolute adaptation, it would be futile to contest the claim. It would be fallacious, however, to draw the author's conclusion from this premise. If, on the other hand, the meaning is that no theory can furnish a tenable formal synthesis of the egoistic and the altruistic elements, as consistent correlates in the economy of life, leave must be taken to doubt the alleged fact. If both the sociologists and the psychologists have not already formulated such a synthesis, they surely seem to be within striking distance of it. For instance, I shall be greatly surprised if my colleague, Mr. John Dewey, does not turn out to have reached from the psychological side an expression which satisfies the conditions. It would be unfair to him to make him responsible for my own version of his theory, which has come to me only in fragments. In brief, as I understand it, the formula amounts to this: The life-process is a rhythm of the series *status* (apparent), in which the demands of the whole predominate; *destruction*, in which the demands of the individual predominate; *reconstruction*, which, considered statically, is a more complex adaptation of the whole and the individual, beyond which the same dialectic of the life-process is repeated indefinitely. For a partial expression of a similar view from the sociological side *vid.* AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY, Vol. VI, pp. 65 and 202. Such psychological and sociological conceptions of universal conduct are also capable of working formulation in more popular form. Thus, instead of the old dualism and antagonism between the egoistic and the altruistic factors, we have a conception of life as a coherent process, in which

the individual and the whole incessantly complete each other. The actual life-problem is not a choice between self-culture and social service, but discovery of the nearest practicable approach to realization of self-culture *in* social service. The author himself virtually finds refuge in this synthesis, pp. 307, 308.

The strength of the essay seems to me to be, not in the author's polemic, but in his analysis. He has examined in successive chapters "The Roots of Ethics," "The Types of Virtue," "Moral Ideals and Moral Progress," "Pleasure, Duty, and the Good," "The Goal of Ethics," in such a way as seriously to weaken the presumption that adequate precepts for the conduct of life can be deduced from *a priori* metaphysical principles. His demonstration that this is both logically and psychologically impossible is ample. While no reasoning will be able to dislodge in one campaign the forces of tradition, the essay before us is a sign of a thought-movement that will presently be irresistible. By examination of the ordinary processes of conduct-valuation, the author justifies the conclusion that "ethics, unless it is to consist of mere barren tautologies, must be based, not on general principles of metaphysics, but upon the study of human nature in its concrete empirical entirety, as it reveals itself to the student of psychology, sociology, and anthropology" (p. 42).

This statement of the essence of the book will doubtless be sufficient to condemn it in many minds to the limbo reserved for destructive criticism of ethical sanctions. On the contrary, readers capable of considering the question as a whole will find it thoroughly constructive. The treatment implies, but does not explicitly affirm, that, under whatsoever formal sanctions, men's actual conduct-judgments have always tended toward the application of one standard, viz., "The known effects of certain types of conduct upon my own experiences and those of my fellow-men are now the grounds upon which these types of conduct are approved and disapproved" (p. 146). The argument proceeds to adduce cumulative evidence that ethics must be a codification of judgments about kinds of conduct that prove to satisfy or dissatisfy human feeling. Thus, the conclusion is a sort of "universalistic ethical hedonism" (p. 276).

It must be admitted that the successive steps of the discussion will overtax the fund of scientific spirit which usually goes with insistence upon constructive method. Those readers, however, who persist to the end of the argument, and give the author the benefit of his own balance, will not fail to discover that the outcome is positive. Such a

passage as the following (p. 443) might well reassure the class of readers whom I have in mind :

In one form or another the religious attitude toward the world-system seems as inseparable from a fully developed intelligent human experience as the ethical or the scientific, and this is of itself sufficient evidence that, whatever may be the accretions with which it is overlaid and disfigured in its various transitory guises, the religious experience in its permanent essence is an inseparable element in a comprehensive human experience of the world. And this is all that can be said of the scientific or any other aspect of the world of experience.

Or still better (p. 499) :

The ice-water of metaphysical speculation neither destroys nor sustains the active life, whereas the strong wine of religion, if it turns in the corrupted nature to poison, ministers strength and vigor to the frame of the fundamentally healthy. It is thus, I conceive, a pure mistake to think that metaphysics could ever furnish a substitute for practical religion. The metaphysician, being by nature a critic and analyst of experiences, may find "faith" more difficult than most men, but if he is to act as well as to think, there must be occasions when he does well to come out of his metaphysical shell and abandon himself to the current of vigorous practical emotion. For action, he too must have his "religion," even though he knows in his reflective moments that no man's religion, not even his own, is unalloyed truth. In fact, the very knowledge that no religion can be quite the truth should save the metaphysician from the temptation to treat any as mere error.

ALBION W. SMALL.

---

*The Social Problem.* By J. A. HOBSON. London: James Nisbet & Co.; New York, James Pott & Co., 1901. Pp. 295. \$2.

THE author's claim is stated in the preface: "This volume is designed to be an informal introduction to the science and art of social progress. It does not profess to furnish any sufficient outline of sociology or politics, but seeks to ask and answer certain preliminary questions which confront thinking men and women who are interested in work of social reform, and wish to reach satisfactory intelligible principles for their guidance in such work." He proposes an examination of the defects of economics in order to learn the true requisites of a social science which can furnish a satisfactory basis for an art of social progress. The work is divided into two books, whose titles are "The Science of Social Progress" and "The Art of Social Progress," but the boundary between science and art is not distinctly defined.